

## FORM B – BUILDING

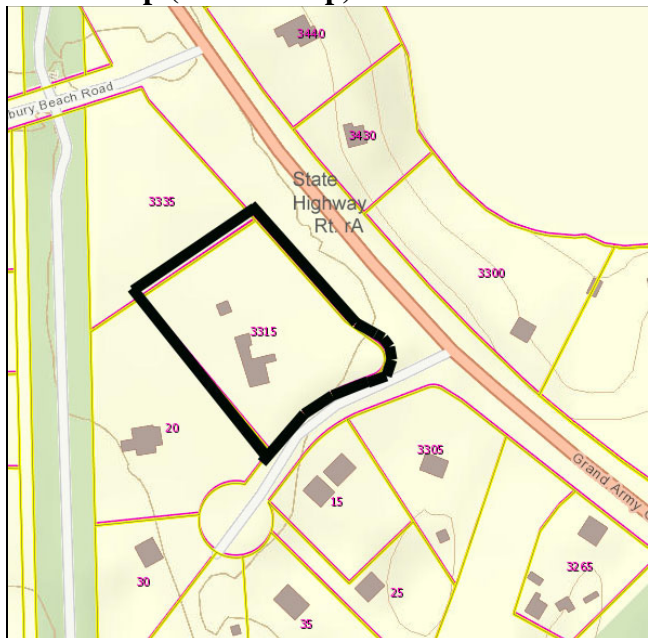
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

### Photograph



Assessor's Photo: view from north.

### Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

**Organization:** Eastham Historical Commission

**Date:** May 2013

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

11-56

ORLEANS

EAS.723

**Town/City:** Town of Eastham

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Eastham Center

**Address:** 3315 State Highway

**Historic Name:** Benjamin Higgins House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** pre-1880

**Source:** deeds, historic maps

**Style/Form:** Colonial Cape

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

#### Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood

Roof: wood shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** garage/outbldg.; shed

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): front pavilion; right side garage wing (1984); front gabled dormer

**Condition:** fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 1.12 acres

**Setting:** The subject property is located on the west southwest side of State Highway. Adjoining it on the north is a large cemetery. The remaining immediately surrounding land uses are single family residential, though Minister's Pond is just beyond one lot across the highway to the east and south of it is the Nauset Haven cottage colony. A rail trail is one lot to the west.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

3315 STATE HIGHWAY

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The reputedly colonial house on the subject property reflects the historic Cape Cod form, from which later Colonial Revival renditions take their inspiration. (Inspection of the interior for finishes and construction methods would be needed to verify the Assessor's construction date of 1725.) It has a rectangular footprint, brick center chimney and a squat form covered by a large gable roof that provides for a garret above the main house. It likely originally had a five-bay front facade with center entrance, though this has been obscured by a projecting ell off the front of the house. That ell is two bays deep and one bay wide and has a brick front wall chimney. (There is a possibility that the house was originally oriented to the southwest, making this a rear service/kitchen wing, but this was not able to be determined from available views.) Another addition is the gabled front dormer on the main block. (Building permits for these alterations are unavailable, thus dates unknown.) In 1984 a much larger garage and family room wing was constructed off the right (north) side. (See plans, below.)<sup>1</sup> The entire building is clad with wood shingles. There are two shed buildings located north of the house. A wood privacy fence is located in the rear yard between the garage wing and the closest shed. The property is heavily wooded with deciduous trees and a number of evergreen trees.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Title to the subject property at 3315 State Highway cannot be reliably traced before 1890, when deeds refer to it as the "Ben Higgins Homestead." The property no doubt passed to this Benjamin Higgins (1801-80) from his father, also Benjamin Higgins (1767-1852). Deeds establish that by 1800 Benjamin Higgins owned and occupied a house on the west side of State Highway, quite possibly the 3315 State Highway house; alternatively, 3315 State Highway may have been the house of his father Elkanah Higgins (1729-1815). In 1817 Elkanah's widow Elizabeth deeded to Benjamin and his younger brother Joshua one-third shares in their late father's house and one-third shares in other real property. If 3315 State Highway was built in 1725, as town records indicate, it might have been built by Elkanah Higgins's father Ebenezer (1701-ca 1778), whose first marriage took place in 1721 and who is identified in a genealogy as a "large landowner." The same source states that Ebenezer's son Elkanah "lived in that part of the ancient town which is now called Eastham," probably in its northern part. Family tradition affirms that "he owned a large farm in this part of the town, extending from shore to shore." It adds, though, that the Elkanah Higgins house stood "where the North School House stands," clearly suggesting that it had been razed.<sup>2</sup> Thus the house at 3315 State Highway is likely to have been the house Benjamin Higgins Sr. was occupying in 1800.<sup>3</sup>

The 1850 census shows Benjamin Higgins Sr. as an 83-year-old man living in the household of his eldest son, farmer John W. Higgins; he died in Eastham in 1852. Benjamin Higgins Jr. is shown in a separate household with his wife Hannah Higgins and children Mary, Daniel, Mercy, Eldad, Clarinda, and Benjamin Franklin Higgins. Both Benjamin and his son Daniel, then eighteen, were at sea at the time the census was taken. By 1860 Benjamin Higgins had, like many other Eastham men, turned from maritime work to farming. He is shown in the 1860 census with \$750 in real property and in 1870 with \$460 in real property. His wife Hannah died in 1871, and by 1880 he is shown in a household with his daughter Clarinda, then thirty-four years old.

Benjamin Higgins died in 1880 at the age of seventy-nine, and in 1891 his heirs sold three parcels, including 3315 State Highway, to Franklin Ellison.<sup>4</sup> The first parcel was the "dwelling house, barn and other outbuildings in central Eastham and known as the Ben Higgins homestead," bounded on the north by the Congregational cemetery, on the east by County Road, and on the west by land belonging to the Old Colony Railroad. Records variously state that Frank Ellison was born in Denmark, Boston, and New York, and by 1860, when he was ten years old, he was living in the Eastham household of Joel and Thankful Brewer. In 1873 he was working as a shoemaker when he married Martha A. Beverstock of Wellfleet, and by 1880 he was working as a brick mason and had three children, Elizabeth, Ida, and Maud.

Tax records for 1902 show Ellison with a house valued at \$400, a barn at \$75, a hen house, a horse and a cow, and 17 acres of land. Martha Beverstock Ellison died in 1907. The 1910 census shows Ellison as a brick maker living with his unmarried daughters Ida and Maud as well as with two boarders, aged ten and fourteen, who may have been state wards and were both of African descent. One of them, Clara or Claretta Tucker, born in Massachusetts about 1900, was still in the Ellison household in 1920; she is there labeled as a "city child" among with three other girls of African descent in the household. Tucker was still living in Ellison's 3315 State Highway house in 1930 with him, his daughters Ida and Maud, and three other African American females between the ages of eight and thirteen. Ellison was operating a truck farm in 1920 and a "home garden" in 1930.

Tax records for 1926 show Ellison with a four-acre homestead lot, a house worth \$1150, a barn and shed, poultry houses, and another outbuilding; he owned the same property in 1931 and 1937. His daughter Maude died in 1938, and the 1940 census

<sup>1</sup> Town of Eastham records, building permit issued Aug. 7, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Katharine Chapin Higgins, Richard Higgins, *A Resident and Pioneer Settler at Plymouth and Eastham, Massachusetts, and at Piscataway, New Jersey, and His Descendants* (Worcester, MA: by the author, 1918), 107-8, 159-60, 244-45, 353, 466-67.

<sup>3</sup> Elkanah Higgins to Benjamin Higgins, 4 November 1800, Eastham Town Book 999041-108, refers to land west of the County Road and east of the road "leading to Great Neck" adjoining where Benjamin Higgins's house then stood. See also Elizabeth Higgins, administrator estate Elkanah Higgins, to Joshua Higgins, 4 July 1817, Eastham Town Book 1. Page 999041-68, which mentions the widow and sons holding undivided thirds of the house.

<sup>4</sup> Mary J. Hatch et al. to Franklin Ellison, 3 April 1891, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (hereafter cited as BCD) 204:197.

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shows Ellison as ninety-five years old living with his daughter Ida, then sixty-five, and three African American lodgers, including Claretta Tucker, then thirty-nine. Frank Ellison died in Eastham in 1940, and in 1947 his daughter Ida is shown with the homestead lot, then 5.4 acres, and a house valued at \$1300.

Ida M. Ellison died in 1957, and she left the 3315 State Highway property to Claretta Tucker. In 1959 Tucker sold it to H. Norman Sibley, who subdivided the property into the 3315 State Highway house and its outbuildings with 1.12 acres, five new house lots, and a cul-de-sac (now Jason Drive) creating access to these lots. Sibley owned the property until 1979, when he sold it to Briggs A. Easterbrooks Jr. and his wife Carolyn of Hendersonville, North Carolina. They are the current owners of the property.<sup>5</sup>

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## MAPS

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<sup>5</sup> Claretta N. Tucker to H. Norman Sibley, 24 August 1959, BCD 1053:514; Sibley to Briggs A. Easterbrooks Jr. and Carolyn G. Easterbrooks, 27 March 1979, BCD 2897:95; see also "Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass. As Surveyed for the Estate of Ida M. Ellison," August 1959, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Plan (hereafter cited as BCP) 150:93, and "Subdivision Plan of Land in Eastham, Mass., As Surveyed for H. Norman Sibley," March 1962, BCP 169:143.

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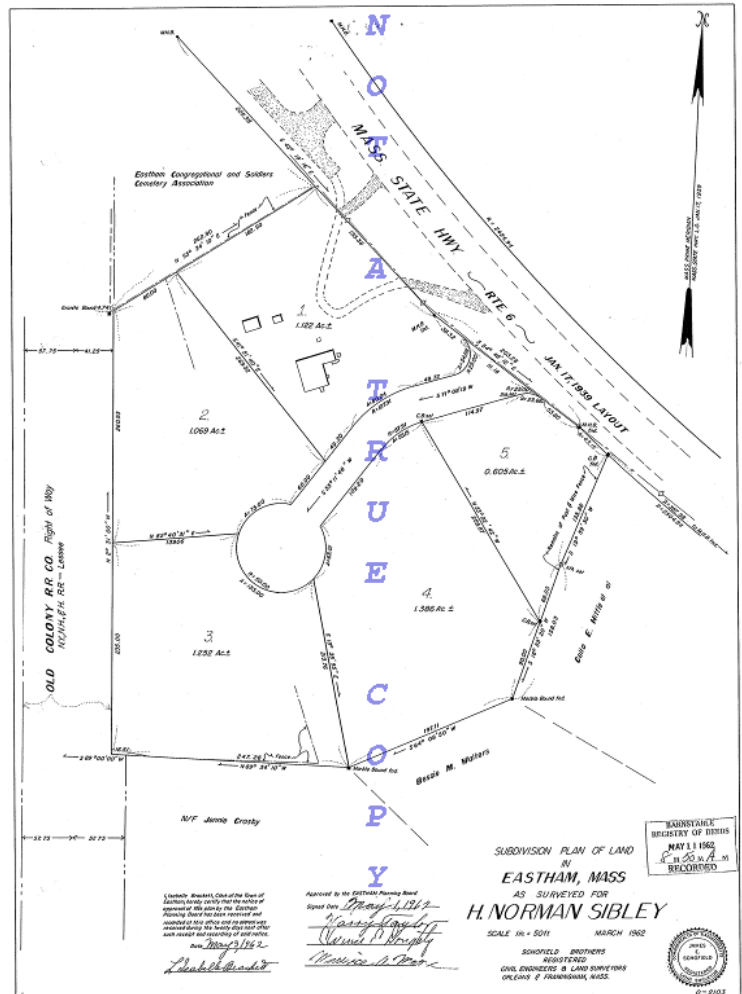
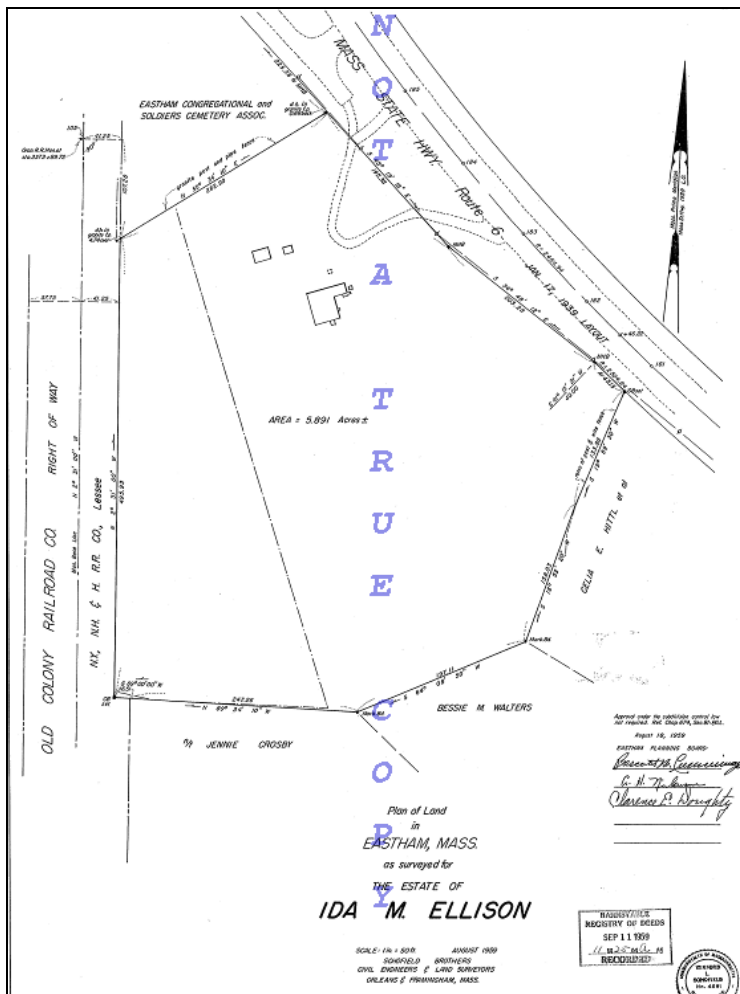
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## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



LEFT: This 1959 plan (BCP 150:93) depicts the Ellison estate property with a dwelling & two outbuildings. RIGHT: The 1962 Sibley subdivision plan (BCP 169:143) shows the cul-de-sac that is now Jason Drive, five house lots & the house & outbuildings at 3315 State Highway.



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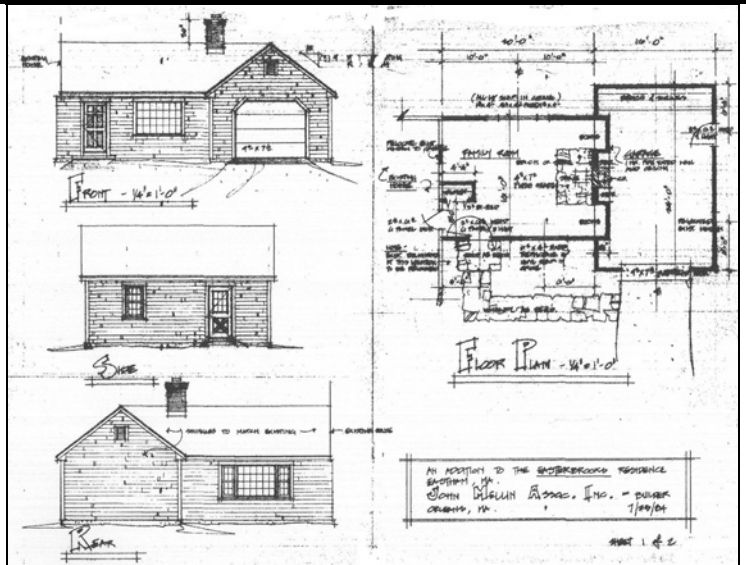
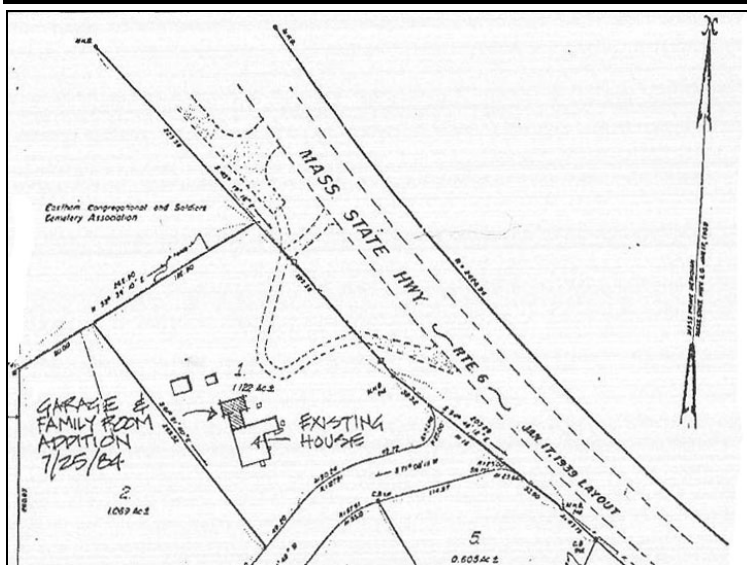
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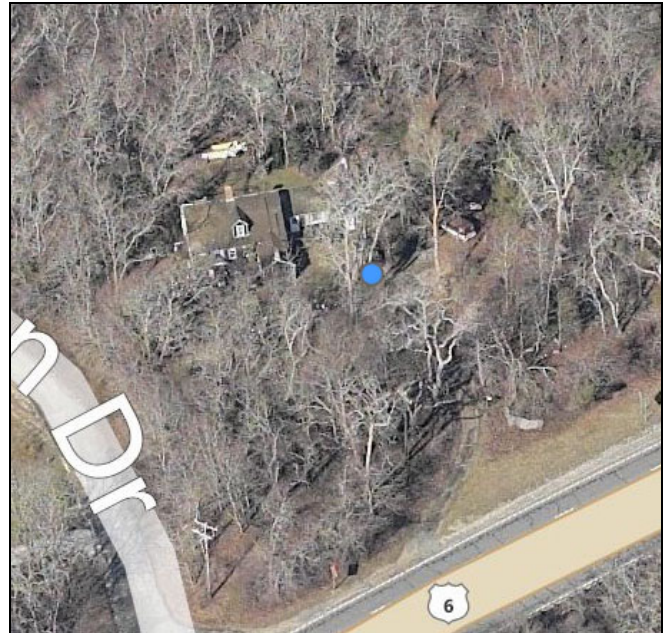
Site and architectural plans for garage and family room addition in 1984.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)



View from north.



Aerial view from east (photo courtesy of Bing Maps.)



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**View from northwest (the cemetery property) and may give a glimpse of what was originally the front facade facing southwest.**